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U.S. House Floats Bill to Defund WHO, WEF and 'Misinformation' Programs

The U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations' Fiscal Year 2024 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill also would slash funding directed to the Wuhan Institute of Virology, the EcoHealth Alliance and gain-of-function research.

By Michael Nevradakis, Ph.D.



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The U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations has proposed cutting government funding for the World Health Organization (WHO) entirely, as part of its budget proposal for fiscal year 2024.

This proposal was included in the committee's Fiscal Year 2024 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill, released June 22.

According to the committee's press release, the proposals are geared toward "cutting spending for low-priority activities and programs."

The bill also includes prohibitions on funding to the Wuhan Institute of Virology, the EcoHealth Alliance and gain-of-function research; termination of U.S. government involvement with the World Economic Forum (WEF); and a ban on government "misinformation" and "disinformation" programs.

It's uncertain if any of the proposed cuts will be adopted, as the bill faces a long path through Congress.

Rep. Ralph Norman (R-S.C.), one of Congress' most vocally opposed to U.S. involvement in the WHO, told The Defender the proposals by the appropriations committee are a positive sign — but more action is needed.

"I had written a letter to House Speaker Kevin McCarthy to move forward with cutting the WHO's funding in appropriations and in his role as speaker," Norman said. "I'm glad to see it did come out of the appropriations committee, but we've got to follow it through to make sure it passes."

In his May 10 letter to McCarthy, Norman said the first step "to avoid the unacceptable consequences of what is afoot with the World Health Organization" is "to terminate further U.S. funding of the WHO, a roughly \$700 million annual contribution."

In a separate letter on May 24 to Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Norman urged the committee "to conduct oversight and consider taking up legislation to address the United States' involvement" in the WHO.

Several medical and legal experts who spoke with The Defender and who have been outspoken in their opposition to the WHO's proposed pandemic treaty and amendments to the International Health Regulations (IHR) also described the bill as a positive development.

Dr. Kat Lindley, president of the Global Health Project and director of the Global Covid Summit, said the bill is "a move in the right direction — probably not everything," Boyle told The Defender. "This is a good first step, but it is not sufficient."

"Even if we do not pay our dues to the WHO and cut off the funding," Boyle said, "we will remain a contracting party to the WHO Constitution/treaty and bound by it. So, we have to terminate our participation in the WHO Constitution/treaty."

Congress has the constitutional authority to do this, Boyle said.

Author and podcast host Frank Gaffney, founder and president of the Center for Security Policy and co-founder of the Sovereignty Coalition, said what the bill means in practice "is unclear at the moment," but that it nevertheless is a "huge first step."

"This is now part of the bill that is being considered and it has to be removed, rather than having to be added to it," he said. "It's easier to defend a good piece of legislation than to modify a bad one."

Dr. David Bell, a public health physician, biotech consultant and former director of Global Health Technologies at Intellectual Ventures Global Good Fund, said that while the WHO was "once a force for good," it now "has become part of a tragedy."

"It is hard to see a way forward without defunding this hijacked organization and working on more appropriate ways to coordinate international health," Bell said.

Noting the extent to which the U.S. government — and taxpayers — fund the WHO, independent journalist James Roguski told The Defender, "In 2022 the United States donated nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars to the WHO, which was over and above the assessed payments we were obligated to make."

The committee's proposals came just as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) held a series of "listening sessions" discussing the WHO's proposed pandemic treaty and IHR amendments, during which numerous experts and activists expressed their opposition to both instruments.

A growing number of lawmakers in Congress also have begun calling for the U.S. to cease funding the WHO and exit the organization. Several bills putting forth such proposals are currently under consideration in Congress.

'Supports American values' by banning 'disinformation' and 'misinformation' programs

The proposed appropriations bill includes what it describes as "cuts to wasteful spending," including a prohibition on funding for "controversial organizations and programs," many of which involve United Nations (U.N.) bodies such as the WHO.

Other "cuts to wasteful spending" proposed in the bill include a prohibition of funds to the Wuhan Institute of Virology, the EcoHealth Alliance and "any gain-of-function research," in addition to an elimination of funding for the U.N.'s regular budget, which the bill's summary states will result in "savings of \$707 million."

The proposal also "terminates" U.S. government participation in 18 programs. These include organizations such as the U.N. Environment Fund and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as well as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the WEF.

According to the bill, it "supports American values" by "banning 'disinformation' and 'misinformation' programs that violate the free speech rights of American citizens."

On June 23, the proposed bill underwent "subcommittee markup" in the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs subcommittee, referring to the "key formal step a committee ultimately takes for the bill to advance to the floor."

During the proceedings, several representatives shared their views on the proposal to defund the WHO, while the motion for the proposed bill to move to the full appropriations committee was passed.

Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R-Fla.), said, "The ineffectiveness and the egregious failures of the United Nations and U.N. bodies do not merit support," while Rep. Kay Granger (R-Texas), chairwoman of the appropriations committee, said the proposed bill "prevents funding for controversial programs."

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) said the bill "abdicates U.S. leadership at the United Nations and other multilateral and international institutions," including the WHO.

The bill's passage from subcommittee markup represents an early step in the congressional appropriations process.

Full committee markup will follow, during which the bill may be amended. It may then be placed on the congressional calendar, leading to its consideration on the House and Senate floors, during which more amendments may be proposed.

House and Senate votes may then follow. Any differences that emerge between the House and Senate versions of the bill would then have to be resolved. The bill may also be added as a rider to other pending legislation.

Eventually, the bill may reach the president's desk for his signature — or a veto.

The proposed bill may be considered for markup by the appropriations committee as soon as the week of July 10, a source with knowledge of the committee's procedures told The Defender, although this date is not yet definite.

WHO a 'real and present danger'

As the appropriations committee is considering defunding the WHO, the HHS Office of Global Affairs on Wednesday organized "stakeholder listening sessions" on the draft pandemic treaty. Previously, on June 20, the committee held a listening session on the proposed IHR amendments.

The HHS Office of Global Affairs employs at least two of the U.S. negotiators for the IHR amendments.

At Wednesday's listening session, Pamela Hamamoto, lead U.S. negotiator for the pandemic treaty, said:

"The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced that threats to global health require rapid, effective, and sustained international cooperation. By applying the lessons learned from COVID-19 and other outbreak response efforts, we aim to ensure that we are better equipped when another pandemic threatens."

Hamamoto added: "The administration will not support any measure at the World Health Organization, including in these negotiations, that in any way undermines or compromises U.S. sovereignty or security."

Others took a different view. Lindley told The Defender that many "American citizens opposing the treaty and the power grab by the WHO" testified. "The sentiment was that the WHO is a real and present danger to what we stand for as Americans."

Lindley was one of the individuals who testified Wednesday. She said the pandemic treaty "would dramatically expand its authority to declare another pandemic" and impose "obligations to be followed by all member nations."

"My ask is to exit the WHO," Lindley said.

Roguski, who also testified Wednesday, described the listening sessions as "a thinly veiled charade," because HHS ignored over 33,000 public comments it received, opposing U.S. involvement in the WHO, the pandemic treaty and the IHR amendments.

He called on the U.S. to "stop these negotiations immediately" and "defund the WHO."

People who testified during the June 20 listening session on the IHR amendments expressed similar sentiments.

Political opposition to the WHO intensifies

Opposition to the WHO is becoming increasingly vocal in Congress in recent weeks. Several bills have been proposed calling for the U.S. to stop funding or withdraw from the WHO.

These include H.R.79 (WHO Withdrawal Act), H.R.343 (No Taxpayer Funding for the World Health Organization Act), H.R.1425 (No WHO Pandemic Preparedness Treaty Without Senate Approval Act) and S.444 (No WHO Pandemic Preparedness Treaty Without Senate Approval Act).

Referring to this congressional activity, Norman told The Defender: "We've got to disassociate ourselves with the WHO ... This country is in danger of losing its sovereignty. We cannot let this happen by staying in the WHO."

The bill that appears to have the most support so far is H.R.79, proposed by Rep. Andy Biggs (R-Ariz.), which has 49 co-sponsors.

On May 22, Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.), chair of the House Subcommittee on Global Health, Global Human Rights and International Organizations, announced forthcoming congressional hearings regarding continued U.S. membership in the WHO and involvement in the pandemic treaty and IHR amendments under negotiation.

Norman, Biggs, Smith and other members of Congress spoke in support of defunding and exiting the WHO at a May 17 Sovereignty Coalition press conference.

Roguski said, "Merely defunding the WHO is an inadequate response," adding that H.R.79 would repeal the 1948 joint resolution through which the U.S. joined the WHO, which he said, "should have been declared unconstitutional 75 years ago."

"If we can get the Biggs legislation attached as a rider to the budget resolution or [other] resolutions that Biden cannot veto, that should be sufficient to protect ourselves from the WHO totalitarian police state, along with the cutoff of funds," Boyle said.

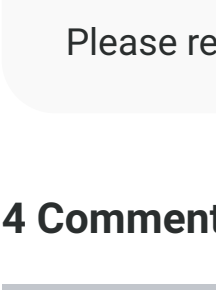
Bell called the WHO "a servant of private and corporate interests" which has adopted "a program of centralized, authoritarian management that has everything to do with the profit of its sponsors and very little to do with public health."

"No democracy should hand power over its people to private and hostile interests, or support organizations that are bent on impoverishing people for the benefit of a few."

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jeannonkralj an hour ago Our government has gone along with the criminal perpetrators of this horrendous murderous genocidal criminal fraud. The trust is gone. Put these criminals in prison for life starting from the top down. They destroyed our republic and committed treason. This evil has been planned for decades. too few of our leaders spoke up at the right time. Instead they went along with the crimes when they should have had the character to stand up for truth and righteousness and for the common good of the people..

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